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Letter dated 10 May 2005 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the "Recommendations of the Arab Regional Seminar on Combating Terrorism", held in Cairo on 16 and 17 February 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter, with its annex, to the attention of the members of the Security Council and ensure that it is circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Yahya **Mahmassani**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 10 May 2005 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Recommendations of the Arab Regional Seminar on Combating Terrorism

Cairo, 16-17 February 2005

We, the heads and members of the delegations of the States members of the League of Arab States participating in the proceedings of the Arab Regional Seminar on Combating Terrorism, held in Cairo on 16 and 17 February 2005,

Expressing our appreciation to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, for organizing the Arab Regional Seminar on Combating Terrorism for the purpose of coordinating international, regional and subregional efforts to combat terrorism and enhancing the means of international cooperation in that field under the guidance of the international and regional instruments and Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism,

Expressing our desire to create an effective partnership with international and regional organizations and to become fully integrated into international action to unite efforts in the field of counter-terrorism based on group responsibility, the participation of all classes of society and their cooperation with the authorities concerned,

Expressing also great concern over the growing waves of terrorism both in the region and elsewhere in the world and the resulting dangers to the stability and security of Arab societies and threats to the rule of law, democratic institutions and social values, not to mention the consequent thwarting and paralysis of development and development programmes,

Affirming that terrorism poses a grave threat to international peace and security, thus making it essential to condemn it and to confront it through the establishment of comprehensive strategies aimed at updating and developing criminal justice systems and security services and mobilizing and coordinating efforts at the international level, all under the aegis and constant solicitude of the United Nations,

Affirming also that dealing with terrorism is not limited to the establishment of legislative and security measures alone, but requires that such measures be accompanied by a preventive approach aimed at rejecting extremism and promoting a culture of dialogue thanks to the role that can be played by religious and educational institutions and the media,

Recalling the Security Council resolutions concerning the threats to international peace and security posed by criminal terrorist acts, in particular resolutions 1373 (2001), 1535 (2004), 1540 (2004) and 1566 (2004),

Strongly affirming that the effort to combat terrorism must take place within the framework of respect for human rights and the rule of law,

Recalling the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the right of peoples to self-determination, including General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV),

Taking into consideration also the importance of the commitment to the implementation of the international and regional instruments on counter-terrorism that have been ratified and acceded to, including the 1998 Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, the 1999 Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism, the 1999 African Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the 2004 Gulf Cooperation Council convention on combating terrorism,

Welcoming the participation of the Assistant Secretary-General acting as Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1535 (2004) in the work of the Seminar and valuing the sincere and fruitful dialogue between the Committee and the representatives and experts of the Arab States concerning ways to implement resolution 1373 (2001), which stemmed from the desire of those States to pursue such a dialogue in connection with their commitment to support the efforts of the Committee and its Executive Directorate,

Valuing the efforts made by the Arab States in the fields of prevention and combating of terrorism, consisting in the experience presented during the Seminar and the reports submitted to the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee,

Commending the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, for its role in the fields of crime prevention and criminal justice in general, its perseverance in coordinating regional and subregional efforts in the field of combating terrorism and organized crime and the plan of action established by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in that field, and encouraging member States to cooperate with the Regional Office in promoting the plan,

Renewing the resolve to fulfil our commitments to preventing and combating terrorism all over the world and in our own region, which is one of those most sorely afflicted by terrorism and everything connected with it, directly or indirectly, in the way of transborder organized crime,

Recommend the following:

1. Condemning terrorism in all its forms and with all its methods and practices regardless of its justifications or motives; coordinating efforts with a view to calling a halt to terrorism at all international levels; affirming that terrorism belongs to no religion, nationality or geographic region; resolving to assist all parties so as not to permit the use of their territory for terrorist purposes; and preventing terrorist organizations from obtaining weapons or financing;

2. Working towards completing the preparation of the United Nations draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and arriving at an international definition of terrorism based on the distinction between terrorism and the legitimate right to resist occupation, bearing in mind that the killing of innocent civilians is not admitted by any divine law or international covenant;

3. Considering the United Nations as the cornerstone for unifying international cooperation efforts to combat terrorism and building the role played by its principal organs, first and foremost the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, while taking advantage of the technical consultative assistance provided by the Office and by donors;

4. Calling for the adoption of the necessary measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction or their components, emphasizing the importance of accelerating the preparation of the United Nations draft convention on the suppression of nuclear terrorism and making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons;

5. Urging member States that have not yet acceded to the international instruments on counter-terrorism to do so as soon as possible in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and seeking to establish committees made up of experts who are representatives of the bodies concerned with combating terrorism at the national level to ensure compliance with the provisions of that and other relevant Security Council resolutions;

6. Calling upon member States not yet party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the protocols supplementing that Convention and the United Nations Convention against Corruption to ratify or accede to those instruments;

7. Calling upon member States to develop their national legislation on counter-terrorism in order to bring it into harmony with the provisions of the relevant international and regional instruments and seeking to implement the provisions on international cooperation contained in them, especially in respect of systems and mechanisms of criminal prosecution relating to terrorism, organized crime and corruption;

8. Encouraging member States to comply fully with existing international standards on combating money-laundering and terrorist financing and to attribute special importance to the question of suppressing the financing of terrorism and intensifying the efforts of international agencies and organizations in that area;

9. Encouraging member States, in accordance with the stipulations of the above-mentioned regional and international instruments, to promote and enhance international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism, especially with regard to extradition and requests for judicial assistance, with particular attention to the close relationship between terrorism and other forms of organized crime such as money-laundering, illegal trade in arms and explosives and trafficking in drugs and in persons;

10. Seeking to open direct channels of communication between member States as well as on the regional and international levels with a view to the exchange of information and expertise among the competent national agencies in those States and the regional and international counter-terrorism organizations concerned, through the establishment of an international network for such information;

11. Instilling and consolidating values of tolerance and communication between peoples and factors that bring different cultures and civilizations closer together,

fighting all forms of extremism and striving to spread the values of a culture of dialogue instead of extremist thinking;

12. Establishing a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy at the national and international levels in which security procedures are related to measures aimed at dealing with the root causes of terrorism, in particular poverty, marginalization, occupation, regional conflicts, violations of human rights and the absence of justice, democracy and the rule of law;

13. Making use of media, educational and other institutions to increase social awareness regarding the seriousness of terrorism and organized crime and encouraging member States to prepare effective public information strategies, following an information policy designed to encourage the masses to take part in the fight against terrorism and organized crime;

14. Stressing the importance of the role played by civil and grass-roots organizations and cultural, educational and religious associations in creating greater consciousness of the seriousness of terrorism and the need for protection against it, for combating it and for promoting a culture of dialogue;

15. Stressing the recommendations that emerged from the Counter-Terrorism International Conference held in Riyadh, which constitute a comprehensive approach to dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, and affirming at the same time that collective action is the most beneficial way to develop an overall strategic perspective in order to crush and wipe out that phenomenon in accordance with international laws and covenants;

16. Calling for the establishment, under the aegis of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, of a regional training centre on combating organized crime and terrorism to assist the countries of the region in their efforts towards implementing the international conventions and protocols on combating terrorism, organized crime and corruption in cooperation and coordination with the regional and international centres concerned, as a step in the direction of compliance with the call of the Riyadh conference for efforts to strengthen cooperation in that area, especially through the exchange of expertise and the training of persons working in the area of counter-terrorism, the most important functions of the centre including the following:

- Establishing the desired framework for legal action as required by the relevant international instruments;
- Strengthening regional and subregional cooperation in penal matters, sharing in and exchanging strategic information and making use of advanced methods of investigation;
- Encouraging cooperation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and facilitating interaction among the different countries with a view to making use of successful practices in that field;
- Organizing specialized training courses for judges, public prosecutors and customs and bank employees and training for law-enforcement officers in the modalities of detection, prosecution and the discovery of the connections between terrorist organizations, transnational organized criminal gangs, drug traffickers and money-laundering;

17. Valuing the effective role played by the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice and the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior in combating terrorism at the regional level, whether in the legislative area, as reflected in the conclusion of the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, the adoption of its implementing mechanisms, the establishment of the Arab Strategy to Combat Terrorism and the phased plans for its implementation, and the preparation of model laws, on the one hand, or in other related fields, such as procedures for the prosecution of terrorists, consciousness-raising via the media on the dangers of terrorism or the promotion and coordination of cooperation with other concerned regional or international agencies and organizations, on the other hand;

18. Stressing the cooperation that exists between the League of Arab States and the United Nations Organization and cooperation with Europe and appealing to the Organization to offer its expertise to the League for the purpose of implementing joint initiatives for promoting the international conventions on combating terrorism and organized crime through participation in regional conferences, symposia and workshops that relate to the implementation of the international legal instruments on combating terrorism and organized crime;

19. Making use of the Legislative Guide issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which contains a comprehensive analysis of the international legal instruments relating to counter-terrorism in the areas of criminalization, jurisdiction and avenues of international cooperation, and model legal texts which can serve as guidelines in the drafting of national counter-terrorism legislation;

20. Requesting the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Executive Directorate of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee to step up their technical assistance and offer every other type of support to facilitate for the countries of the region the task of meeting their international obligations in accordance with the provisions of the international legal instruments on combating terrorism, organized crime and corruption.